

**Testimony of
Paul A. La Camera
WCVB-TV, Boston, Massachusetts
on behalf of the
National Association of Broadcasters
(MM Docket No. 93-48)**

RECEIVED**JUN 15 1994**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, for this opportunity to discuss with you the response of our nation's commercial broadcasters to the Children's Television Act of 1990. I am Paul La Camera, General Manager of WCVB-TV which is the ABC affiliate in Boston owned by The Hearst Corporation. I have had the good fortune to work at WCVB for more than 22 years where my roots are in local programming and management.

I particularly appreciate the invitation to participate on this panel which, I understand, is formally charged to address "changes in the availability, quantity, quality and effectiveness" of television programming directed to the educational and informational needs of children since passage of the Children's Television Act.

I am pleased to be able to report to you today that both the spirit and letter of the Act are achieving the intended goal. The Act and the FCC's rules in support of the Act have resulted in stations across the country, of every type, presenting programming for children of merit and distinction. Local broadcasters and the marketplace, notably the national syndicated programming marketplace, have responded with not just a dramatic increase in the amount of educational and informational programming but also with a corresponding elevation in the quality of programming available to young viewers.

As but a modest case in point, please allow me to share with you a little about WCVB-TV's programming for children. On Saturday mornings between 6 and 11, we offer a combination of local, syndicated and network programs for children.

Our local offerings include "Captain Bob" which combines art instruction with a lessons on ecology; "A Likely Story" promoting storytelling and reading; and, from our parent Hearst Broadcasting, "Cappelli and Company" which cleverly uses the medium of song to reach and teach preschoolers. I am proud to add that "A Likely Story" has aired on a total of 80 stations across the country, while "Cappelli" runs on all six stations in the Hearst group.

From the Litton Syndication Company, we carry "Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures," which, as its title indicates, is a classic informational reality program about animals and the environment. And finally, there is the ABC children's schedule which

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includes a mix of both pure entertainment programming and offerings that have values-driven and socially relevant intent.

And our station, as do stations in every city, regularly produces and airs local specials for young people in highly visible time periods. Just since the first of the year, youth specials entitled "A World of Different Music" and "Word Up!" aired in prime time on WCVB.

And I could cite a similar record for the other major stations in Boston. However, I must emphasize that our city is not unique. WCVB, our sister Hearst Broadcasting stations, the other affiliates in Boston, are but examples of stations across America that are producing and airing -- in accessible time periods -- quality, locally originated programs for children.

In 1993, 115 stations submitted a total of more than 300 locally-produced programs to the prestigious NAB Service to Children Awards competition. In preparing for today's appearance, I satisfied myself that I could make these claims to you with a degree of personal confidence and comfort by having our station research the national scene. What we found are literally scores of examples of innovative and meritorious children's programming -- both in series form and specials -- from stations in literally every section of the United States. I fear some would suggest otherwise. But local children's programming is alive and well in America.

And what is available to stations from the syndicated marketplace is also growing and improving in quality. I already mentioned "Jack Hanna" and would add to that such current and pending shows of merit as "Bill Nye the Science Guy" from Disney and Lin Broadcasting, Turner's "Feed Your Mind," Kusner-Locke's "The M3D TV Show," Columbia's "Beakman's World," and "Zooing - Escape to the Wild."

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, your public notice for this hearing asked about the changes in the amount of educational and informational programming available since the Act took effect less than three years ago. Last year's *Notice of Inquiry* stated that Congress intended to facilitate a measurable increase in such programming, but that a review of license renewal applications revealed "little change" in the situation. Your *Notice* also acknowledged that the "slow growth to date" may have been due to a "supply shortage" of available programming, given the "relatively recent" obligation, and the *Notice* went on to request comment on whether this situation would right itself.

Today we have ample and encouraging evidence that the availability and actual airing of educational and informational programming for children is much improved. The increase has been significant and can be seen across types of stations and affiliations.

I have already cited my own anecdotal research confirming this point. Of perhaps greater import are the results of two recently released studies conducted by the

Association of Independent Television Stations that reveal the dramatic growth of such shows both in syndication generally and on independent stations.

INTV's study reports that independent stations, on average, are broadcasting in 1994 approximately four regularly-scheduled half-hour educational and informational programs per week. This contrasts with 1990 when independent stations averaged less than one educational or informational program per week. Approximately 80% of the 1994 shows were broadcast after 7AM. When hours of programming are counted, including programs run five times a week, INTV's study shows that independent stations averaged over four and one-half hours of regularly scheduled children's educational and informational programs per week during the first quarter of 1994. And these numbers do not include the educational specials on independent stations which more than tripled from 1990 to 1994.

INTV's "conservative" syndication analysis (that is, its analysis using only programs "everyone" would agree are educational and informational and omitting many others often considered educational or informational) shows that the number of educational and informational shows "cleared" has more than tripled since 1990. INTV identified eight such shows that together were "cleared" on 576 stations during the 1990 November sweeps period. By November, 1993, there were 19 such shows "cleared" on 1746 television stations. And even this underestimates the total number of hours of children's programs available in syndication by not counting programs that are broadcast five times a week and by omitting many listings.

NAB is conducting a similar study of educational and informational program offerings that will be completed by the date of the this hearing.

I would like to comment briefly on the issue of scheduling, specifically early morning time slots. As the INTV study shows, the vast majority of educational programs are scheduled at 7AM or after. Great numbers of children are up and watching television very early in the morning, particularly younger children (approximately one and one-half million children age 2 - 11 are watching television at 6AM, with about 2.4 million watching at 6:30) and, depending on a station's other programs and other programming constraints, a 6AM or 6:30AM time slot may be not be at all inappropriate. Scheduling, whether it be time slot or day, is the result of complex programming decisions unique to each station and its market.

Broadcasters and the marketplace have responded to the Act and to the FCC's intention to hold their feet to the fire. Broadcasters know that their licenses are in the balance and that more specific and perhaps onerous governmental programming requirements will issue if they do not respond appropriately.

Broadcasters at the same time have been told that perhaps we are a soon-to-be obsolete medium in the face of new programming sources and new delivery systems and emerging competition. In turn, our programming must be ever-more competitive both in

terms of audience delivery and in providing some return on its investment. This all represents a challenge to broadcasters, more to some than to others. Our marketplaces and our stations and our resources vary greatly.

Nonetheless, all types of stations have responded to the Act's and the Commission's call to increase the amount of children's educational and informational programming. The Commission's clear "statement of purpose" has given each television licensee the incentive, the responsibility and the discretion to consider varying ways to serve the child audience in its market. This clear statement of purpose has succeeded. It has produced not just the "increase" intended by the Act, but a dramatic increase. It has produced a laudable response of locally produced programs, both expensive in time and resources, from those many stations who could do so. It has produced programs and program blocks for young teen audiences, previously undeserved. It has resulted in each stations' focusing on the children's television marketplace coupled with their historic public service obligation.

Your *Notice of Inquiry*, issued before this encouraging information became readily available, suggested that, while not preferred, specific regulatory requirements, such as quantification or processing guidelines, might be useful in achieving the Act's goal of expanding the availability of educational and informational programming. Clearly, such steps are not necessary and would be premature at this point. The Act is working. The FCC's statement of purpose and resolve is working.

While specific regulatory requirements might be tempting as insurance against backsliding or as an incentive for those stations who might fail to meet the letter and spirit of the Act, such additional regulations are unnecessary, potentially counter-productive, violative of express Congressional intention, dangerously intrusive in a First Amendment-sensitive area and potentially and unnecessarily harmful to those few stations whose financial and market situation might make it difficult to meet a mandatory number more readily achievable for other stations.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, I believe that the commercial broadcast industry where I have spent my career is populated largely by people of goodwill and high intentions who have sincerely and successfully responded to the Children's Television Act and to the Commission's rules and "statement of purpose" by providing a greatly increased amount of children's educational and informational programming. I believe, moreover, that much of that programming is of high quality and of great benefit to the children of this country.

Because I believe that, I ask you to allow us to continue to serve children, as we are doing, unconstrained by quotas or specific requirements that, in the long run, will run counter to the service we provide our many audiences, not the least of which are the children we are charged and committed to serve.



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Paul A. La Camera
Vice President and General Manager

Paul A. La Camera, a Boston native and 22-year veteran of WCVB-TV, Channel 5, was appointed Vice President and General Manager of the Boston ABC network affiliate on February 15, 1994. He has been with WCVB since the station first went on the air in March 1972 and served as Station Manager since January 1988.

WCVB is owned by The Hearst Corporation. Having won nearly every award possible in its industry, WCVB is widely considered to be one of America's best commercial television stations. It is also one of the country's most successful, reaching more viewers on average than any station in New England. Its four daily newscasts, the 5-7 AM EyeOpener, the Noon-12:30 PM Midday, the 6-7 PM NewsCenter 5 at Six, and the 11-11:35 PM NewsCenter 5 Tonight are generally the ratings leaders in their time periods, giving WCVB a news dominance in its market unmatched anywhere in New England.

WCVB-TV is also widely recognized for its pioneering and prolific local programming productions, many of which have aired nationally on other television stations and on national cable networks.

La Camera hails from a family steeped in television. For 30 years, his late father Anthony La Camera was the distinguished dean of American television critics, writing for the Hearst-owned Boston Record American and Sunday Advertiser and its successor newspaper, the Boston Herald American.

Paul La Camera's career in television began in community relations and local program production and eventually led to station management. Under his guidance as WCVB's senior programming executive in the 1980's and early 1990's, the station won four George Foster Peabody Awards, often called the "Pulitzer Prizes of broadcasting." Also, under his programming leadership, the station won three successive "Station of the Year" national Gabriel Awards and a fourth such award for 1993.

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La Camera was instrumental in the creation of one of the nation's best-known and most celebrated public service campaigns, the anti-prejudice effort called A World of Difference. The White House called A World of Difference "one of the nation's best examples of private sector initiatives."

Originally a two-year campaign on WCVB, A World of Difference eventually went "national" with its co-creator, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and it was carried on dozens of other major television stations in cities across America. WCVB recently re-introduced the campaign in Boston where it is currently airing in an updated version.

Other award-winning Channel 5 campaigns under La Camera's supervision have included: Great Expectations: The Education Project, which ran on WCVB for two years and in cities representing more than 58 percent of the US population, and the station's family values campaign, Family Works!, which aired on stations reaching 75 percent of the country.

In 1988, La Camera was directly involved in the national syndication to the Arts & Entertainment Network of Chronicle, Channel 5's nightly newsmagazine. Chronicle is currently airing nationally on cable's The Travel Channel. Another WCVB program which La Camera supervised, In Good Faith, is also currently seen on cable's VISN network.

Chronicle, in prime access time on WCVB since January 25, 1982, is an example of the type of quality, local programming that La Camera has brought to television. When it was introduced in 1982, it was the first, and in 1994 it remains the country's only locally produced nightly television newsmagazine. Chronicle has won several national awards, and The Boston Globe has called it New England's "best" local program.

In 1988, La Camera oversaw the creation of A Likely Story, a local children's series, based on storytelling and emphasizing the importance of reading and which also is now appearing on stations across the country. The National Association of Broadcasters judged A Likely Story the outstanding local children's program in the country in 1990.

In addition, La Camera has overseen a myriad of precedent-setting local/national productions, including The Cheats, which WCVB produced for the critically acclaimed ABC Afterschool Specials, and the Pops Goes the Fourth and Holiday at Pops Boston Pops concerts, which aired nationally on the Arts & Entertainment Network.

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La Camera served Channel 5 as its Vice President for Programming and Public Affairs from 1984 to 1987. He had been appointed WCVB's Vice President and Director of Public Affairs in 1979, and earlier he had worked as WCVB's Assistant Vice President of Community Services.

La Camera is a trustee of both Boston's Catholic Charities organization and of Emmanuel College. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Boston's Italian Home for Children. He is a board member of the Boston/New England chapter of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences and serves on the Children's Programming Committee of the National Association of Broadcasters. Previously, La Camera served as president of both the Massachusetts Broadcasters Association and the National Broadcast Association for Community Affairs.

Prior to joining WCVB, La Camera was the Director of Communications for the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and worked as a reporter for the Boston Record American and Sunday Advertiser.

A Holy Cross graduate, La Camera has three Master's degrees in all: Masters in Journalism and Urban Studies from Boston University, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Boston College. He was honored in 1992 as a distinguished alumnus of Boston University's College of Communication. A native of the Boston suburb of Winthrop, he resides in another Boston suburb, Newton, with his wife Mimi and their three sons, Mark, Peter, and Christopher. Mimi is Executive Director of the Lupus Foundation of Massachusetts.

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National Association of Broadcasters

The National Association of Broadcasters is a nonprofit, incorporated association which serves and represents America's radio and television stations and broadcast networks.

NAB worked with Congress in its consideration and passage of the Children's Television Act of 1990 and has been participated in Congressional hearings on children's television. NAB filed extensive comments in the Commission's proceeding to implement the Act and in response to the Commission's *Notice of Inquiry* in the pending proceeding.

Since the adoption of the Commission's rules implementing the Act, NAB has been conducting convention and other industry sessions for television broadcasters on the Act and the rules and has been communicating with its television members about the rules by newsletter and by answering inquiries from stations..

For almost ten years, NAB has conducted an annual Service to Children Television Awards competition for locally produced children's programming. Since 1991, NAB has held an annual Service To Children Television Symposium, with a full day of sessions on programming ideas and regulatory requirements. FCC staff have participated on virtually all of our children's television sessions.